

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for an email server to reduce the unintended duplication of messages forwarded to an email recipient, comprising:
 - forming a first composite message comprising a first email message;
 - computing and storing a first representative value for said first composite message;
 - forming, after said first composite message, a second composite message comprising a second email message;
 - computing a second representative value for said second composite message;
 - comparing said first and second representative values;
 - forwarding said second email message to an email recipient only if said first and second representative values do not indicate duplication; and
 - discarding at least one stored representative value based on at least one predetermined criterion.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein said first and second representative values are hash values.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein said first composite message is formed prior to receiving said second email message.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one stored representative value is discarded a predetermined time after it is created.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one stored representative value is discarded when the list of stored representative values grows to a predetermined size.
6. A computer-readable storage medium having software code stored thereon; the code comprising:

code to form a first composite message comprising a first email message;
code to compute and store a first representative value for said first composite message;
code to form, after said first composite message, a second composite message comprising a second email message;
code to compute a second representative value for said second composite message;
code to compare said first and second representative values;
code to forward said second email message to an email recipient only if said first and second representative values do not indicate duplication; and
code to discard at least one stored representative value based on at least one predetermined criterion.

7. The computer-readable storage medium of claim 6, wherein the code to compute said first and second representative values comprises code to compute hash values.

8. The computer-readable storage medium of claim 6, wherein the code to compute said representative values comprises code to form said first composite message prior to receiving said second email message.

9. The computer-readable storage medium of claim 6, wherein the code to discard the at least one stored representative value comprises code to discard such value a predetermined time after it is created.

10. The computer-readable storage medium of claim 6, wherein the code to discard the at least one stored representative value comprises code to discard such value when the list of stored values grows to a predetermined size.

11. An email server platform having a program memory associated therewith, the program memory comprising software code configured to:

form a first composite message comprising a first email message;
compute and store a first representative value for said first composite message;

form, after said first composite message, a second composite message comprising a second email message;

compute a second representative value for said second composite message;

compare said first and second representative values;

forward said second email message to an email recipient only if said first and second representative values do not indicate duplication; and

discard at least one stored representative value based on at least one predetermined criterion.

12. The server of claim 11, wherein the code to compute said first and second representative values comprises code to compute hash values.

13. The server of claim 11, wherein the code to compute said representative values comprises code to form said first composite message prior to receiving said second email message

14. The server of claim 11, wherein the at least one stored representative value is discarded a predetermined time after it is created.

15. The server of claim 11, wherein the at least one stored representative value is discarded when the list of stored representative values grows to a predetermined size.